

## 1 Samuel 23:5-29 - Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014

- The last time, two weeks ago, we only made it to verse 4, where we see David being approached to fight against the Philistines in Keilah.
- This because, they were robbing the Israelite's harvest while they were threshing the grain, and they knew that Saul would not do anything.
- So, after twice seeking the Lord, David receives the confirmation and a promise from God that he will be victorious, he and his men set out.

(5) And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. (6) Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, *that* he went down *with* an ephod in his hand. (7) And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." (8) Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. (9) When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." (10) Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. (11) Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant." And the LORD said, "He will come down." (12) Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will deliver *you*." (13) So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

- If you're anything like me, you're probably wondering how it's possible that these men of Keilah could do this after David had saved them.
- You're probably also wondering how hurtful this must have been to David, not to mention his men, who we're told are about six hundred.
- This would seem to indicate that somewhere along the line, 200 more men joined with the 400 and followed David in departing from Keilah.

- Be that as it may, there are lessons we can learn from all this as it relates to both, what David does, as well as from what David doesn't do.
- First, from what David does do, we can learn the lesson of praying continually and specifically in seeking the Lord as we turn each corner.
- It's rather striking that David continues to seek specific answers from the Lord and as he does the Lord answers him accordingly each time.

One commentator of this said, "Here is a second inquiry. God loveth to be often sought unto by his praying people (Luke 18:1), and the therefore answereth them by degrees, that he may frequently hear from them."

- It's this second lesson as it relates to what David does not do that is most remarkable such that he holds no ill will at the time nor yet future.
- By that I mean David could retaliate in revenge if he stayed and fought upon Saul's arrival to Keilah, and the betrayal by the men of Keilah.
- Instead David heeds God's Word, and once again escapes from Keilah and even when he becomes their king does nothing against Keilah.

- Here again we have a powerful leadership principle that's demonstrated by what David does not do such that he doesn't repay the betrayal.
- Were he to succumb in vengeance to repaying the betrayal it's doubtful that David's life would have been as blessed for as long as it was.
- Herein lies the principle, it's doubtful that any of us will taste from the cup of God's blessing in our service to Him absent having a thick skin.

- This sort of begs the question of why David didn't retaliate when he arguably had every right to after what he had done for them in Keilah.
- I would suggest there are at least two reasons for this, the first of which is that David was doing it as unto the Lord instead of as unto man.
- Were David to do this for man rather than God, he would've been devastated by virtue of his expecting them to reward him instead of God.

- The second reason he didn't retaliate is David was keenly aware of the peril not betraying him would've wrought especially after Ahimelech.
- In other words, David knew what they knew, which was the utter destruction that Saul would bring upon them if they were not to betray him.
- To David's credit, the grief of what Saul did to the city of Priests because of him, had taught David a valuable lesson he would never forget.

Charles Spurgeon in this regard so aptly said it this way, "Observe David's anxiety for the city rather than for himself. Saul had destroyed Nob for sheltering him, and he might do the same to Keilah. Generous spirits cannot bear to bring evil upon others."

(14) And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. (15) So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David *was* in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest. (16) Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. (17) And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." (18) So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

- I see this as being very bitter sweet. Sweet because the last time David and Jonathan assumed they would never see each other again.
- This may explain why they renewed the covenant they had made the last time. However, it's bitter because this ends up being the last time.
- Sadly, Jonathan will never be David's "second," by his side as he tells David he will in his efforts to encourage and strengthen him in God.

- This is interesting in and of itself in the sense that Jonathan was not strengthening David's hand in weaponry or strategy, but in the Lord.
- It's important to note the wilderness of Ziph was a very rugged and difficult place to be due to its topographical mountainous landscape.
- The reason I mention this is because often times God may deem fit we remain in our mountains in the Wilderness of our Ziph for a season.

- Thankfully, God is always faithful to send our Jonathan while in that wilderness to provide us a much needed encouragement and strength.
- Like with the cave of Adullam being that much needed refuge, so too is the Wilderness of Ziph that much needed strengthened in the Lord.
- I like how one commentator said it, "David became a man after God's heart in the shepherd's field but he became a king in the wilderness."

- By the way, Ziph means "refining," which makes the Wilderness of Ziph the wilderness of refining, and such was the case with David then.
- So too is it the case with us by virtue of how God chooses the Wilderness of Ziph to refine us as He prepares us for what's prepared for us.
- The problem with this is, we don't like to be refined in this way, when the fact of the matter is that it's the only way God can accomplish this.

Isaiah 48:10 NKJV Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

(19) Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon? (20) Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand." (21) And Saul said, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. (22) Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, *and* who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. (23) See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the clans of Judah."

- Couple of thoughts here concerning a delusional demon possessed Saul who's so self-deceived he actually believes God is blessing him.
- This is textbook behavior for any man who in his stiff-necked arrogance and obstinance fancy's himself walking in perceived righteousness.
- It's evidenced by Saul accusing an innocent David of being very crafty, an accusation that could only be rightfully levied upon Saul himself.

Charles Spurgeon in speaking to Saul being delusional writes, "Saul had come to regard himself as the injured party and he dared to introduce God's name into his hypocritical speech; thus showing that he had lost all moral sense, and was under a strong delusion to believe a lie. By a course of sin a bad man may at last convince himself that he is right, and even fancy that God himself is in league with him. The Lord save us from so terrible a state of mind."

- So terrible and delusional is Saul's state of mind that he actually believes that the reason David has escaped here-to-fore is that he's crafty.
- The truth of the matter is, David escaped not because his craftiness, David has escaped because of his God, here-to-fore, delivering him.
- The reason I point this out is because Saul is so unhinged that his reason and logic have fled from him, as fast as David has fled from him.

Psalms 54:1-7 NKJV To the Chief Musician. With Stringed Instruments. A Contemplation of David When the Ziphites Went and Said to Saul, "Is David Not Hiding with Us?" Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. (2) Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. (3) For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. Selah (4) Behold, God *is* my helper; The Lord *is* with those who uphold my life. (5) He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. (6) I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O LORD, for *it is* good. (7) For He has delivered me out of all trouble; And my eye has seen *its desire* upon my enemies.

Alan Redpath writes in his commentary on David's Psalm says, "David is now looking at God. First he was looking at his enemies and these supposed friends of his, but now he sees them through God. If you begin with God, your enemies grow small. If you begin with the enemy, you may never reach God."

(24) So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men *were* in the Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. (25) When Saul and his men went to seek *him*, they told David. Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. (26) Then Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them. (27) But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" (28) Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape. (29) Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.

- I can't think of a better way to end the chapter than with God miraculously intervening on David's behalf at what looks like the last second.
- By any stretch of the imagination, Saul, who was so close in proximity to David, should have been able to capture and kill David very easily.
- But God!!! But God thwarts David's enemy from doing that which God would not allow him to do, this because of God's anointing on David.

- Allow me to close by sharing what the Lord has ministered to me concerning the aforementioned Cave of Adullam, and Wilderness of Ziph.
- In addition to this cave and wilderness, we now have the "Rock of Escape." I'm relatively certain you know where I'm going with all of this.
- Notice how that the cave represents refuge, the wilderness represents refining, and the rock represents escape and they're all in that order.

- Here's what I'm thinking, first we come to the Savior in the cave of refuge when we're saved; as such the cave of refuge is for our salvation.
- Then secondly, we are refined by the Savior in the Wilderness of Ziph after we're saved; as such the wilderness of refining is sanctification.
- Then thirdly, we will escape with the Savior as the Rock of Escape because we're saved; as such the Rock of Escape is relocation/rapture.